



September 2004

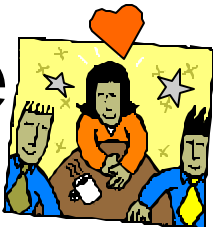
FrontLine Employee

A newsletter from the Employee Advisory Service (EAS)

Call EAS: Olympia (360) 753-3260 Seattle (206) 281-6315 Spokane (509) 482-3686

Web: <http://hr.dop.wa.gov/eas.html>

Winning with Team Balance



Two things must be in balance for an effective team: content and process.

Content is the work, tasks, agenda, and goals of a team. Process is how team members interact, treat each other, and behave. Many teams focus on content, but let problems with process sabotage productivity. *Diagnostic question:* Does each team member feel valued, respected, included, energized, and happy to be a member of the team? If not, try this fix: Create a tradition that team members actively observe team process and point out team behaviors that impede work. All agree to be evaluated on how well they are helping manage process issues. At every meeting ask: "How is our productivity and how well are we working with each other?" Then decide how to make improvements for the next meeting. Talk to the Employee Advisory Service (EAS) for more ideas.

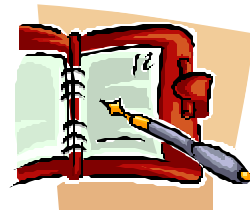
NEW COWORKERS Need Inside Track



A new hire could take years to learn everything about an organization necessary to maximize his or her productivity.

Shorten the learning curve by sharing information with a coworker about work culture, traditions, and important communication expectations within the organization. Don't forget sensitive political issues crucial to successful networking. Provide a list of key relationships that will help complete tasks, and build in opportunities to interact and obtain feedback to avoid workplace mistakes and pitfalls.

Your Personal ACTION PLAN



If you are motivated to pursue a goal, put together your personal action plan. Its purpose: to put the goal into action and make its success more likely. Successful plans are written, and include breaking the goal down into distinct actionable parts. Each part or step must answer *how*, *what*, and *when* action will occur. If any one of these measurements is missing, you will be more vulnerable to procrastination and distraction, the two villains of every worthy pursuit. Here's a step from a larger list of steps toward establishing a fitness routine. *Not specific:* I will exercise this week after work. *Better:* This Friday, at 5:00 P.M., I will go to the ABC Gym and exercise for 45 minutes.

Presenting "Generations in the Workplace"



The Employee Advisory Service, (your employee assistance program -EAP) can be scheduled to present this to your staff. It is not uncommon to encounter four generations of employees in today's workplace. Each generation approaches work with different history, values and expectations. This presentation familiarizes participants with research findings and implications for managing different generations and working better, together.

EAS presentations can be arranged for staff meetings or for a combination of agencies at little if any expense. Call your closest EAS office for details.

The "Boomerang" Generation



Millions of parents have at least one adult child living at home, and the number of empty nesters welcoming an adult child home for a temporary stay is growing. These adult children have been called the "boomerang generation." Divorce, unemployment, financial troubles, mental illness and chemical dependency, and other problems help explain this phenomenon. For most parents, the goal is helping the adult child gain independence as quickly as possible. Unfortunately, many parents worry about the meaning of "a temporary stay."

If you have an adult child at home, or one on the way, consider the following tips from the beginning to keep your relationship healthy and help facilitate a transition back to independent living:

1) Discuss mutual expectations, house rules, chores, and shared financial responsibilities. 2) Consider a written agreement on these issues and the length of stay. 3) Avoid the trap of parental guilt that can fuel a lengthier stay, financial dependency, and the avoidance of responsibilities. 4) If relationship conflicts emerge, talk to your EAP. Don't wait. 5) The same goes for a substance abuse issue. The EAP can lead you to intervention help. Good communication, clear expectations, and a willingness to keep boundaries will help both you and your adult child look forward to a successful future.

EAPs, Health Issues, and Your Supervisor



Q The EAP knows about my stress problems. If I sign a release, can the EA professional tell my supervisor that I need to cut back on certain duties, overtime, or other essential functions of my job that may interfere with my mental health?

A EAPs cannot initiate requests to change an employee's job description or direct the organization to modify the employee's duties or essential functions. However, your EA Professional can advise you about talking with your physician and other health care providers to provide your supervisor with suggestions to consider changes to your duties or essential functions. This reasonable accommodation may be temporary and must assist in completing your job. A signed release is necessary. The EAP can also discuss the management of stress with you and what intervention strategies might be helpful.

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Support for Returning Troops



A significant percent of troops returning from war reportedly face mental health consequences of exposure to combat (posttraumatic stress disorder, depression, and anxiety) according to a New England Journal of Medicine study (July 2004). One out of two Americans knows someone serving overseas, so it makes sense to know a few tips to help a veteran readjust to civilian life. 1) Listen carefully if your vet wants to talk. 2) Be patient. Don't take anger or other strong feelings personally. 3) Don't make statements such as, "You're lucky you made it back." This is not reassuring because it can invoke guilt over friends or acquaintances wounded or killed. 4) Spend time with your vet, but also give him or her private time. 5) Encourage the troubled vet to take advantage of mental health resources in the community or from the military. Two-thirds of vets with PTSD refuse help because of concerns about stigma, but may change their minds later.

Workplace Hazards and Teens



Teens are injured on the job at a higher rate than adults. Studies show that most teenagers don't recognize workplace dangers as easily as older workers who have more experience in recognizing hazards and understanding necessary protective measures. Teenagers are also more reluctant to ask important safety questions that can prevent injury or death. Encourage younger coworkers (or your working kids) to follow safety precautions, ask questions, wear proper protective clothing and shoes, and resist taking chances that may endanger them.

Source: National Institute of Safety and Health (NIOSH)